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UC San Diego's Sexual Assault Awareness Month Events Mark Pioneering Prevention and Support Efforts

Campus's Sexual Assault Resource Center celebrates 30 years of innovative work throughout April

Established in 1988 by a group of dedicated staff and grassroots activists, the University of California San Diego's CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center has been a standard-bearer of survivor support services and prevention education for campus sexual assault, relationship violence and stalking. As the campus recognizes Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in April, the center will hold events looking back at the pioneering work in support services and rape prevention, while moving forward to inform individuals how they can use their voice to promote a safe and respectful community and stop sexual violence before it happens.



CARE at SARC director Nancy Wahlig (center) with team members Jessica Heredia (left) and Lana Talampas (right)

SAAM events include the National Day of Action April 3, Succulents for SAAM April 17, Friends Supporting LGBTQIA+ Survivors April 18, and more. A full calendar of events can be found [here](#).

In addition, the City of San Diego will honor the center with a proclamation presented at City Council Chambers on April 24 to honor the work and achievements of CARE at the Sexual Resource Center. Council president pro tem Barbara Bry (D-1) along with councilmembers Chris Ward (D-3) and Georgette Gomez (D-9) will present the proclamation.

“UC San Diego has a well-established history of prevention efforts related to sexual assault and sexual violence,” said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. “Through the Sexual Assault Resource Center, we continue the critical work of educating the campus community on these pressing

issues and providing ongoing support services for students, faculty and staff.”



Before and after pictures of the “Circle of Truth” wreath

The seeds for CARE (Campus, Advocacy, Resources and Education) at the Sexual Assault Resource Center were first planted as early as 1979 when the University of California developed a grant for sexual assault prevention on campuses across the system. Years later, when the grant work was complete, UC San Diego students made their voices heard to the administration to continue sexual assault prevention efforts on campus, which led to the establishment of the center in 1988.

“The administration really responded to the needs of the students,” said Nancy Wahlig, director of CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center, who was the program’s first full-time employee.

The stand-alone center was the first of its kind established across the University of California system and among college campuses in San Diego.

“The support for these services from administration on our campus and across the UC is a model for college campuses across the country,” Wahlig added.

In 2014, when UC President Janet Napolitano convened a task force to oversee the university’s wide-ranging efforts to prevent sexual violence, which UC San Diego was an active member of, they listed seven key recommendations to prevent sexual violence. Among the recommendations for each UC was the establishment of an independent, confidential advocacy office, which UC San Diego had already had in place for more than 25 years.

The following year, the UC San Diego center expanded its services for response and advocacy to faculty and staff, with a new reporting structure under the Chancellor’s Pradeep K. Kholsa’s Office.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month events at UC San Diego will include:

- **Circle of Truth, All Month Long, Outside of Price Center Ballroom East:** All UC San Diego community members are invited to pin a ribbon on the wreath if they or someone they know was sexually assaulted.

- **National Day of Action, April 3, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Library Walk:** CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center will be on Library Walk distributing educational information as well as teal ribbons and posters. Passersby will be encouraged to sign a pledge to support survivors and be a responsive bystander. Limited edition totes will also be distributed.
- **Succulents for SAAM, April 17, 11 a.m. to noon, The Zone (students), Huerta/Vera Cruz Room (staff/faculty):** The campus community is invited to join staff from CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center in recognizing the resilience of sexual assault survivors by planting succulents. The event's popularity has grown over the years and will be held at two different locations, the Zone in Price Center West for students and the Huerta Vera Cruz Room in the Student Center for staff and faculty.
- **Friends Supporting LGBTQIA+ Survivors Talk, April 18, noon to 1:30 p.m., LGBT Resource* Center:** This discussion will focus on the unique concerns and needs of LGBTQIA+ survivors, including ways to support a survivor and how friends and loved ones can practice self-care while supporting a survivor.* This event is not open to media.
- **City Council Chambers Proclamation, April 24, time TBD, Council Chambers, 202 C Street, SD, 92101:** The City will honor the work and achievements of CARE at the Sexual Resource Center with a proclamation presented president pro tem Bry along with councilmembers Ward and Gomez.
- **Denim Day, April 25, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Library Walk:** The entire campus community is encouraged to wear denim April 25. CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center and the Women's Center will have a display on Library Walk commemorating the event, which was established 20 years ago. The campaign was sparked by a ruling by the Italian Supreme Court where a rape conviction was overturned because the justices felt that since the victim was wearing tight jeans she must have helped her rapist remove her jeans, thereby implying consent. The following day, the women in the Italian Parliament came to work wearing jeans in solidarity with the victim.

For more information about CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center and its 30th Anniversary click [here](#).

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